



CAPTAIN GEORGE'S Penny Dreadful

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ENTER: THE SCARECROW

THE SCARECROW REARS BACK HIS MISSHAPEN HEAD AND LAUGHS THE LAUGH OF A MADMAN... HIS HUGE Gaping WOUND OF A MOUTH PAYING TESTAMENT TO THE INHUMAN NATURE OF THE CREATURE.

THE MERCILESS MANIACAL ROAR OF THIS BEING WHO WOULD OTHERWISE BE ONLY A SYMBOL OF TRICK-OR-TREATING, HAYRIDES, AND PUMPKIN PIES... WOULD TERRIFY THE TWO DEAD MEN AT HIS FEET... IF THEY COULD HEAR IT.

HE SEEMS TO ENJOY THESE DEATHS... TO REVEL IN THEM... TO BATHE IN THE WAVES OF PAIN WHICH THE DYING MEN SEND FORTH FROM THE DEPTHS OF THEIR SOULS.



ANY SANE MAN WOULD LOOK SILENTLY ON THIS SCENE, UNABLE TO LAUGH... AND WONDER, PERHAPS... "WHAT'S THE JOKE?"

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| WRITTEN BY SCOTT EDELMAN | DRAWN BY RICORIVAL | COLORS BY GLYNIS WEIN | LETTERED BY MARCUS WEIN |
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A WEEKLY REVIEW

THIS WEEK!!
CAPTAIN GEORGE'S YELLOW JOURNAL!!
A P-D SUPPLEMENT

DON HUTCHISON

SF REVIEW: THE STONE THAT NEVER CAME DOWN by John Brunner
(DAW Books, \$1.25)

Having produced two monumental sf novels which pointed out in dramatic terms most of the problems facing mankind, Brunner seems to have arrived at the conclusion that it's possible to disregard sure knowledge. In this one he postulates a deus ex machina drug which makes it difficult to ignore data possessed--probably an invention of frustration on the writer's part.

As in Brunner's *Stand On Zanzibar* and *The Sheep Look Up*, this new novel is told from the multiple viewpoint of a large cast of characters. It is well written--as most of Brunner's work is--but suffers from the lack of a clearly defined protagonist. It's an interesting book but the solution is fantasy; taken as fantasy or a simple thriller it could have been more entertaining.

GIVE WARNING TO THE WORLD by John Brunner (DAW Books, 95¢)

Despite the title this is not one of Brunner's recent ecological horror warnings but is, as I recall, an expanded version of an old Ace Double. It concerns that hoariest of sf's old chesnuts, the secret alien invasion; but take as a simple thriller this one is entertaining, a pleasant reminder of science fiction's less serious (less pretentious?) days.

THE BEST OF PLANET STORIES #1 edited by Leigh Brackett (Ballantine \$1.25)

This one could be described as the ultimate reminder of sf's giddier days. For 15 years, from 1940 to 1955, Planet Stories reigned as king of the unabashed "space opera" pulps. Space opera, as Ms. Brackett points out in her delightful introduction, is the perjorative term applied to interplanetary adventure stories, the folk myth or hero-tale set in far-flung space. The so-called space opera did not pretend to be educational or possess sophisticated literary values; it was a tale written to entertain you, pure and simple.

The stories in this first collection are not necessarily the best of Planet Stories, but they are all nostalgic and make for a nicely balanced collection. I've always liked *Lorelei of the Red Mist*, Leigh Brackett's collaboration with the then youthful Ray Bradbury; it's included in this collection along with information as to the exact spot where Bradbury took over. (Brackett had written half of the 20,000-worder when she was called off to Hollywood to work on the screenplay for Howard Hawks' *The Big Sleep*.)

In addition to the Brackett/Bradbury story there are yarns by Poul Anderson, Ross Rocklynne, Raymond Z. Gallun and Fred Brown among others. I don't know what newcomers will think of *The Best of Planet Stories* (I suspect they'll enjoy it), but for anyone with fond recollections of the old magazine, it's a must. This series is a must.

CAPTAIN GEORGE'S PENNY DREADFUL, a weekly review established in 1968, is published by the Vast Whizzbang Organization, 594 Markham Street, Toronto, Ontario.

GUEST COLUMN

BY GARY MOFFATT

Well, they've done it again--just as Mad Monks was shaping up as the freshest new comic strip in many moons, out the Sun yanks it in favour of the insipid Eek and Meek and relegates it to the ever-growing circle of good strips not (at least to my knowledge) available in any Canadian paper--Tiger, Kelly, Snuffy Smith, the Dropouts, Momma, Rick O'Shay, Secret Agent Corrigan, Johnny Hazard, Smidgens etc from the USA; Garth, Scarth, Modesty Blaise, James Bond, Jeff Hawke, The Perishers from Britain. One could also compose a long list of worthless strips featured quite frequently in the Canadian press, with the NEA lineup and Broom Hilda (which constantly confuses vulgarity with humour) as leading candidates.

Having returned to Ottawa, I'll write here from time to time about local screenings of films which, to my knowledge, haven't played in Toronto in recent years. The main source is the Canadian Film Theatre, an organization not unlike the Ontario Film Theatre at Toronto's Science Centre. Other interesting films pop up in a variety of places here; for instance, the National Art Gallery recently showed a 1937 product called Renfrew of the Mounted which was bad enough to make me suspect it was made in Canada though I couldn't tell, not having heard of the studio or any of the players except Chief Thundercloud. James Newell portrayed a singing mountie who combined the worst traits of Nelson Eddy and Dick Powell.

Recently, the Film Theatre devoted an evening to Josef Von Sternberg, showing two silent films of two hours each (since the budget doesn't run to hiring a pianist, the overall effect was a trifle eerie). The films, however, were fascinating. Von Sternberg's career is paradoxical; he was most interested in social realism, but elements of Hollywood fantasizing creep inexorably into his early works and in the end he was chiefly remembered for the ultra-glamorous Dietrich series. For instance, The Last Command was conceived as a tribute to the Hollywood extra but one cannot help but suspect that their working conditions were portrayed no more realistically than was life in Russia in 1917. Emil Jannings, who specialized in pathetic old men, is seen here as a one-time Czarist general who dies reliving his moment of glory as a Hollywood extra. A thin plot brilliantly executed.

Underworld was an early gangster film (Paramount did one more major gangster effort, Mamoulian's City Streets, before abandoning the genre to Warner Brothers). Here George Bancroft is well cast as the vulgar gangster destroyed by his tenderness for a lady whom Cagney and Robinson later stereotyped. Evelyn Brent is properly demure as the lady, and comedian Larry Semon gets a few laughs as the sidekick. The major weakness is the casting of Clive Brook as the alcoholic whom Bancroft rehabilitates and Brent falls in love with. Brook's ultra-wooden approach to acting is okay in Shanghai Express and Cavalcade where his characters are pretty dull anyway but here is a role with which much more could and should have been done.

PETE HARRIS

TRIVIA PLUS: The following comes under the general heading of Extremely Trivial Information, but I offer it in hopes that somebody out there, like me, appreciates social footnotes as much as historical headlines. Last week, Captain George got in a load of Life magazines (a complete run from 1936 to 1952) along with a number of art and photography publications from the 1930s and 40s. Now, here's where we really start getting obscure:

In the August, 1937, issue of Popular Photography (with swimming star Eleanor Holm on the cover) there's a short item about taking your handy-dandy camera off to the local neighborhood theatre and snapping pictures of the images projected on the screen. In fact, the item reported, theatres in New York, Detroit and "dozens of other cities" were even conducting Candid Camera Nites when "amateurs can bring their cameras along and shoot away at the silver screen to their heart's content. Theatre managers are hoping these candid nights may be the successor to bank nights, which the courts have outlawed in many states, and have already begun to give worthwhile prizes for the best photographs. They are usually held on Monday nights, when movie attendance is ordinarily rather light..."

Hmmm...interesting, I thought, and filed the information away in my grab-bag mind. A few days later, Captain George hands me the December, 1938, issue of Life containing an article on director Edmund Goulding's remake of The Dawn Patrol, the WWI adventure with Errol Flynn, Basil Rathbone and David Niven. It is profusely illustrated with photos from the movie, including what looks like a frame enlargement of the title credit. Great stills, I thought, until I discovered that, according to the text, the photos by Life photographer Peter Stackpole were shot directly from the screen at a Hollywood preview.

So, whatever happened to the practice of snapping pictures of your favorite stars at the neighborhood theatre? Whatever happened to the neighborhood theatre?

Incidentally, the more I look through the Lifes that Captain George has-- he's selling them for \$1-\$5 a copy-- the greater is my admiration for the people who produced that magazine week after week, especially in the 1940s. The magazines are a wealth of close-up historical and social information. The closest thing we have to it today is People magazine and it is only a faint echo.

STOP THE PRESS!! LATE YELLOW JOURNAL FLASHES!!

Marty Herzog reports: (1) Marvel and National are working together to put out a SUPERMAN-SPIDERMAN teamup magazine selling for \$2. It will be the large-size format and be 100 pages plus. Written by Jerry Conway. Art by Ross Andru. Out late summer or fall. (2) JACK KIRBY RETURNED TO MARVEL AS OF APRIL 1st. If Stan Lee keeps the promise he made at Cosmicon the Silver Surfer might be back in his own magazine.